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Washington, DC 20585

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Cynthia V. Anderson

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

FROM: CYNTHIA V. ANDERSON
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

SUBJECT: Nuclear Safety Culture and Lessons Learned

I want to reinforce my commitment to safety in all of our operations. The purpose of this memorandum is to stress the importance of communicating technical safety issues and management decisions on technical considerations in a clear and effective manner to employees. To that end, I want to share lessons learned and good practices identified in the attached reports: 1) the Independent Review of Nuclear Safety Culture at the Hanford Site Waste Treatment Plant (WTP), and 2) the Type B Accident Investigation Report for the Radiological Contamination Event during the Separations Process Research Unit (SPRU). As you discuss and implement at your sites the insights gained through the Environmental Management (EM) safety culture surveys conducted in fiscal years 2009 and 2010, keep in mind the recommendations provided in the attached reports. There are commonalities identified by the complex-wide safety culture surveys and the ones identified in the attached reports. These lessons learned are of great importance for capital construction projects and the continuous improvement of the safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of EM operations.

Highlighted below are several recommendations to sustain a strong nuclear safety culture.

From the WTP review:

- Ensure that management communications and actions clearly demonstrate management attention to nuclear safety and quality;
- Effectively communicate rationale for management decisions on technical issues;
- Perform systematic assessments of existing processes for identifying and resolving nuclear safety issues;
- Ensure that change is effectively managed and communicated as project progresses through major stages;
- Institutionalize processes and formally define roles and responsibilities and clarify interfaces between internal organizations;
- Ensure that employee concerns are carefully evaluated and addressed; and
- Promote a questioning attitude and ensure there is no fear of retribution or a perception about retaliation.



From the Type B Accident Investigation at SPRU:

- Cultivate an atmosphere of open communication and acceptance of employee feedback regarding work processes and safety concerns;
- Ensure that lessons learned identified during performance of work and event critiques are incorporated into subsequent work activities;
- Implement managerial controls and safety measures necessary to prevent or minimize the severity of a recurrence of the same type of event;
- Strengthen the level of rigor and discipline in executing the work planning process such that work steps provide necessary details to ensure steps are accomplished as planned;
- Fully understand, characterize and control radiological hazards;
- Maintain an effective radiation program for evaluating and controlling contamination sources during demolition activities; and
- Implement adequate work control processes that fully characterize facility conditions to support proceeding with work steps.

If you have any further questions, please contact Kenneth G. Picha, Jr., Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary at (202) 586-5151 or Terry Krietz, Acting Director, Office of Safety Management at (301) 903-6456.

Attachments

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